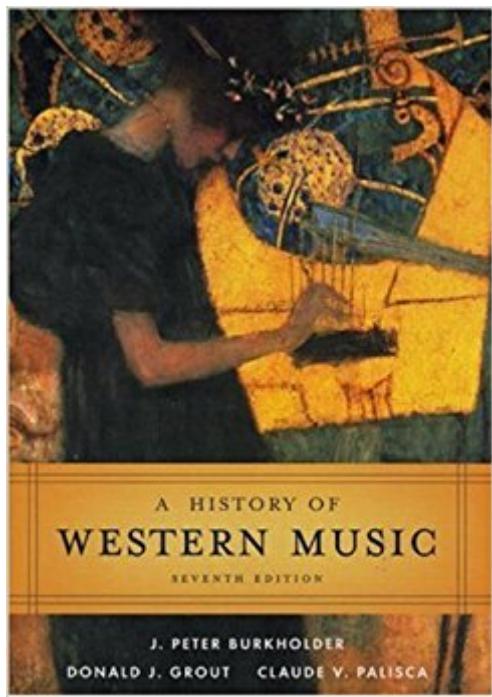


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# A History Of Western Music



## Synopsis

Renowned for its comprehensive coverage of genres and styles in Western music from antiquity to the present, *A History of Western Music* has secured its place through six editions and for almost a half-century as the definitive resource for every music student. Maintaining the authority and breadth of coverage that have always defined this classic text, J. Peter Burkholder has meticulously revised and restructured the text to make it more accessible for today's students. This revision places a stronger emphasis on social and historical context and adds substantially expanded pedagogy and striking four-color design.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

i'm just a neuropsychologist who is interested in music - very interested, but not a formal student or teacher. I've studied clarinet, piano, recorder in some detail... I got this for an overview and general grounding, and also in the hopes of being able to obtain a good deal of detail when i wanted it. for the most part it does both, but, as to the latter - depth/detail - some things are covered in great detail and others in what i would call a cursory manner, with a couple sentences. In some cases, i myself know there is much more easily available, just from my lifetime of perusing liner notes, watching PBS or listening to NPR, the occasional book, and other ways of learning about music. Of course, the editors/writers had to pick and choose, but i just think some areas are under-represented; the book is already big so there would be little downside to it being even half again bigger. Maybe i just hoped for more because i already knew what was in there. My background is admittedly uneven. My major complaint, however, which probably should prompt even more "points" knocked off the rating,

is that there are accompanying materials - the written/graphic "anthology" and the "recorded" anthology, both of which i would like to get, but they are expensive and it is VERY (!!!!) difficult to determine exactly which of each of these really goes with the 8th edition i got. Everything seems to have different editions, and there are the "lite" version (something like 6 cds) and the "complete" version (like 15 cds or something), i think of both. the reason to be sure is that in the margin there are (very helpful) indications where in the written/graphic and in the recorded anthology you can find the score (written/graphic) or music (recorded) materials that are being discussed.

Before I say anything else, you should know that the everyday price for this 6th edition hardcover book is much less at your local bookstore (not at liberty to state where). Why on earth does charge so much!?!? I was delighted to hear that Palisca had released yet another edition of this fine reference on the history of Western art music. I present pre-concert lectures & talks for the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Ravinia Festival and other local orchestras and I find this reference to be a good starting point for refreshing my knowledge of the historical context behind a piece of music I've been asked to talk about. The writing gets clearer and easier to read with every new edition. I found the 6th edition a very easy read, engrossing and wonderfully thorough given the scope of what it sets out to achieve. Since I want this reference to assist me with historical context, I found that it does a terrific job up to the late 19th century, and is somewhat lacking from then on. The reference treats the late 19th and 20th century on a composer-by-composer basis and doesn't link the overall trends very well. For instance I couldn't find much on why Shostakovich and Prokoviev composed as they did, whereas composers of the 18th and 19th centuries are placed in larger trends and movements rather easily. I understand that it takes time and dedicated scholars to reveal the many layers that make up an era and its art, so I am forgiving if still a little frustrated. I was impressed that Palisca set out to have each and every section & composer reviewed by scholars in their respective fields of expertise.

I remember the First edition of Grout's "A History of Western Music"--it was the main text in use when I was a first year undergraduate student. In fact it was one of the standard texts in use at a large number of colleges. The good news is that I was pleased to see the excellent changes. I didn't have to look far to find my first (1 st) edition Grout ( I've used it still until I purchased this new 6th edition several weeks ago)--there are 101 more pages of text. In reality there is much more to look at as the 1st edition book was only 6 x 9 inches. The new 6th Edition is larger: 7 1/4 by 10 1/2 inches. In addition, there is a highly attractive layout; the best feature? A wonderful

highlighted-in-blue area (appearing every 40 pages or so) in which the composers themselves speak about a wonderful range of topics such as Francois Couperin 'On the Union of the Italian and French Styles' or, the great J.S. Bach's description of one the church service's he organized (known as an 'Order of Service') taken from a collection of his memoirs. Lastly, I enjoyed seeing the addition of an overall "Time-Line of Events" which prefaces each unit. This includes not only items from music, but any historical event which remotely affected change in music or musical thought. My singular critical note is perhaps something which the authors had little time to devote to. The 6th edition ends with composers who, in this reviewer's opinion, were certainly not 'mainstream'--like John Cage (1912-1992) (who's infamous "4'33" is actually a period of four minutes and thirtythree seconds in which the 'performer' remains totally silent). Cage was popular in the late 70s more for his extremism than anything else.

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